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AN UNUSUAL FORM OF SCABIES IN FOWLS*

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In the course of investigations dealing with the parasitic infestations of poultry during the summer of 1919, a condition of rare occurrence was observed in two cockerels forwarded to the Biological Laboratory for examination, and which, because of its rarity, is probably worth recording.

The fowls in question were forwarded to us from Oka, La Trappe, Province of Quebec, and upon arrival presented the following symptoms: Inability to eat owing to the eyelids being completely glued together; heads held down in a rather pendulous state, the comb, wattles, eyelids and face being covered with dried exudate and epidermal crusts somewhat similar to those seen in newly recovered cases of chickenpox or a mild form of infra-orbital roup.

These fowls were placed in experimental coops pending the receipt of information relative to the suspected condition, and upon examination two days later were noticed to be much improved, the eyes being open and the birds eating ravenously.

As no detailed information had been received, these cockerels were killed on Oct. 30, 1919, for internal examination, as it was thought probable that tapeworms were present in the intestines, and it was then noticed that the legs were partially devoid of scales. The scales had exfoliated, leaving the shafts of the legs rather whitish in color, the denuded areas being in sharp contrast to the normal yellowish scales still present. One cockerel showed a larger area of desquamation than the other bird.

The condition did not in any way resemble the ordinary form of Scaly-leg due to the mite *Cnemidocoptes mutans,* no large calcareous crusts being present, nor deep cracks or erosions. Furthermore, this parasite could not be found although an extended search was made at the time.

In scrapings from the heads and legs of these cockerels a parasite, new to us, was discovered to be present in large numbers. This parasite, through the kindness of Dr. F. C. Bishop, Bureau of Entomology, Dallas, Texas, and Dr. Ewing, Washington, D. C., was identified as *Megninia gallinulae* Buchh.

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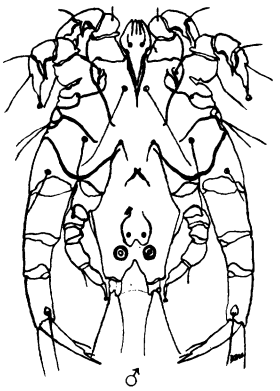
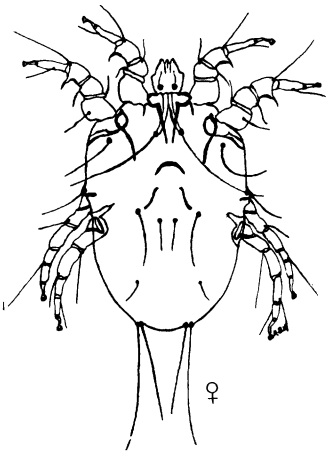
* Published with the approval of Dr. F. Torrance, Veterinary Director General.

Outline drawings of male and female parasites are herewith reproduced, but satisfactory drawings of larvae could not be made owing to excessive shrinkage after mounting, although many were present in the scrapings.



Megninia gallinulae—male.



Megninia gallinulae—female

INFECTION EXPERIMENT

On Oct. 31, 1919, three yearling Barred Rock hens were procured for experimental purposes. These hens were in the period of moult, but otherwise were quite healthy. The heads were rubbed freely with a small brush until the serum commenced to exude slightly and scrapings containing parasites were then rubbed into the scarifications. A careful daily observation was made of these fowls and no untoward effects were noted, the hens continuing to moult normally and recovering their new feathers in the course of a month's time.

On Jan. 30, 1920, these hens were removed from the experimental coops and scrapings from the heads and legs failed to show evidence of any parasites.

As previously stated, the only information available as to the point of origin was the express label bearing the inscription, Oka, La Trappe, and although several attempts were made to ascertain the name of the consignor, and the extent of the infection, all our inquiries remained unanswered.

It is unfortunate that our suspicions as to the exact nature of the disorder were not earlier aroused, as the mating of these cockerels with young pullets might have resulted in a natural infection.